



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 09, 2022 – 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME/President Mansori

President Mansori called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

ROLL CALL:

The VAC Secretary called the roll:

PRESENT: President Mansori, Vice-President Martin-Pinto, Commissioners William Barnickel, Hanley Chan, Jason Chittavong, Deborah Dacumos, Courtney Ellington, Courtney Miller, Nicholas Rusanoff, Raymond Wong

ABSENT: Commissioners Bullard (excused), McDonald (excused), Olivieri (excused)

Quorum present.

PRESENTATION

- The Road Home Program – An innovative, two-week program for veterans impacted by the invisible wounds of war and life. Overview provided by the program outreach coordinator, Alejandra Hernandez.
 - Due to a last minute scheduling conflict, Alejandra Hernandez was unable to be in attendance. The Road Home Program will be added to a future meeting agenda.

COMMUNICATIONS

Officers' Report:

President

- Cited recent passage of veterans preference for affordable housing legislation. Congratulated all involved with specific thanks to Supervisor Mar and Legislative Aide Alan Wong.
- Noted tonight's meeting recorded through MS Teams. Recording will be posted to VAC website.
- Welcomed commissioners back from July recess.

Vice-President

- Mentioned planning is underway for Fleet Week events in October. More details to come.

Staff Secretary

- VAC website: working with SFGov team on video posting capability for landing page. Upgrades expected by early fall.



- Business cards on order for Commissioners Ellington and McDonald.

Committee Reports

- Legislative Committee
 - Chair Jason Chittavong reported the Legislative Committee voted to present two items for the Commission's consideration:
 - Legislative Committee be set at a maximum five-member body.
 - The VAC re-instate a Rule Committee
 - President Mansori thanked Commissioner Chittavong for the report. She noted committees will be discussed later during the meeting under Unfinished Business. At that time the Commission will address the two items presented by the Legislative Committee.
- Communication and Events Committee
 - Chair Nicholas Rusanoff stated the committee had no report at this time.

Supervisor Liaison Reports

- District 1: Sup. Chan – Commissioner Bullard
 - No report – Commissioner Bullard absent.
- District 2: Sup. Stefani – Commissioner Miller
 - No update as reported by Commissioner Miller.
- District 3: Sup. Peskin – Commissioner McDonald
 - No report – Commissioner McDonald absent.
- District 4: Sup. Mar – Commissioner Barnickel
 - Commissioner Barnickel thanked the group for their work on the affordable housing for veterans legislation. He noted it was a two year effort and stands out as a great achievement in the 40+ year history of the VAC.
 - Mentioned three projects in progress in District 4: one on Irving Street, another near the Great Highway, and one near SF Zoo. All will include affordable housing for veterans.
 - Update regarding VA Hospital: Last month, Commissioner Barnickel and Supervisor Mar presented three retiring nurses with Certificates of Honor from the Board of Supervisors.
- District 5: Sup. Preston – Commissioner Chittavong
 - Spoke with Supervisor Preston and scheduled monthly meetings with the supervisor and his legislative aide. Commissioner Chittavong noted the supervisor has past experience working directly with veterans in need of housing.
- District 6: Sup. Dorsey – Commissioner Rusanoff
 - Commissioner Rusanoff recently met with Supervisor Dorsey at fundraising event. He noted the supervisor voted in favor of BMR legislative. Will be in monthly conversation regarding veterans issues in District 6.
- District 7: Sup. Melgar – Commissioner Chan



- No update – Commissioner Chan reported he had planned to meet with the supervisor at an event, but event was cancelled. Scheduled to meet next month.
- District 8: Sup. Mandelman – Commissioner Dacumos
 - Had been in conversation with Supervisor Mandelman about SB9, but noted SB9 was recently vetoed by the Mayor. Commissioner Dacumos further noted she is pursuing efforts to have Filipino veterans of WWII honored during the month of October for Filipino heritage.
- District 9: Sup. Ronen – Commissioner Miller
 - No update as reported by Commissioner Miller.
- District 10: Sup. Walton – Commissioner Ellington
 - Working with Supervisor Walton’s staff to schedule a speaking engagement for the supervisor at a veterans community awards gala. Commissioner Ellington further noted she will need to connect with Commissioner Rusanoff about a dental college in Supervisor Dorsey’s district that offered free screenings during Veterans month.
- District 11: Sup. Safai – Commissioner Bullard
 - No report – Commissioner Bullard absent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- Call for motion to approve June 14, 2022 regular meeting minutes.
- Motion – President Mansori/Second – Commissioner Barnickel.
- All in Favor – Yes: 10, No: 0, Abstain: 0.
- June 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes approved.

Absent: Commissioners Bullard, McDonald, Olivieri.

AGENDA CHANGES

No agenda changes

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Supervisor/Commissioner Liaison Review [Discussion]
 - President Mansori began by noting there are two commissioners representing more than one district each, with Commissioner Bullard reporting for Districts 1 and 11; and Commissioner Miller for Districts 2 and 9. She asked if commissioners without a liaison assignment will volunteer to take a district. After discussion, Commissioner Wong agreed to take over as liaison for District 2.
 - President Mansori thanked Commissioner Wong, and added the commission will continue to check in on liaison assignments and make changes as appropriate. She concluded by asking for any further comments or suggestions regarding liaison assignments. As there were none, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.
- Committees [Discussion]



- Communication and Events Committee – President Mansori requested the committee hold its first meeting before September 13, and set a recurring meeting schedule.
 - Communication and Events Committee Chair Nicholas Rusanoff confirmed the committee will meet before the end of August.
 - Commissioner Dacumos commented that Fleet Week events will be discussed at the August 12 meeting of the SF Council. She will bring updates to the committee. She further commented on the possibility of having the Congressional Gold Medal for Filipino veterans in conjunction with Filipino heritage month of October. President Mansori recommended Commissioner Dacumos bring this topic to the attention of the Legislative Committee. President Mansori noted the time constraint in getting this done before October, as the VAC meets on a monthly basis. With that in mind, she can step in as commission president to move things along at a faster pace, however the preference is the process begin with the Legislative Committee.
 - President Mansori asked for any further comments related to communication and events. Commissioners Barnickel and Ellington shared details of veterans events upcoming in the next few months; noting events are not sponsored by the VAC, but will be of interest to the veterans community. President Mansori thanked the commissioners and requested they email event details to the VAC secretary. She acknowledged there are several commissioners who work with veterans non-profit organizations, and stated that while the VAC cannot endorse such events, information may be published on the VAC website for community awareness and engagement.
- Legislative Committee – President Mansori clarified expectations of the committee, and stated the correct title is “Legislative and Rules Committee.” As a non-chartered commission, the VAC does not publish or write policies, the commission only advises. As such, the Legislative and Rules Committee may work on bylaws and veterans issues legislative work. President Mansori continued by saying the structure of committees is a work in progress, as administrative support and the commission structure evolve. The plan is to eventually create separate committees.
 - Commissioner Chittavong thanked President Mansori for the clarification, and followed up on Legislative and Rules Committee’s request to become a five-member body. President Mansori advised submitting this as an actionable item for a future commission meeting agenda.
 - President Mansori opened discussion about placing limits on number of committee members and creating additional committees.
 - Commissioner Ellington requested clarification on items voted on by committees. President Mansori responded that committees vote to recommend an item to the full commission for action. No item is approved without the majority vote of the commission. President Mansori added the Executive Team is working to find online training for commissioners that will provide updated information about



commission work, as well as compliance with Sunshine Ordinance and Brown Act.

- Commissioner Chittavong noted the Legislative and Rules Committee remains a seven-member body, but asked about reduction/selection process should the committee be approved to become a five-member body. President Mansori responded that currently the commission president decides on service of committee members. She suggested revisions to the committee selection process as an example of an item the Legislative and Rules Committee may take under consideration at a future meeting.
- After discussion, President Mansori stated the following items will be added to the next meeting agenda for further discussion:
 - Commission to set a timeline on when to create separate, three-member committees.
 - Commission to re-establish Rules as a separate committee.
- President Mansori called for any additional comments on committees. As there were no further comments, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

NEW BUSINESS

- Policy Roundtable Event [Discussion]
 - President Mansori suggested the commission hold a policy roundtable sometime in the last quarter of the year. She suggested an in-person meeting open to the public, and recommended the Veterans Memorial Building as a possible location. If commission is interested, this will be added to next month's agenda for a vote. After discussion, it was determined commissioners are interested in scheduling a policy roundtable event, and the item will be added to the September meeting agenda. President Mansori asked the Communication and Events Committee Chair to include this topic for detailed discussion at the committee's meeting in August. She requested the Committee Chair bring recommendations for the event to the next commission meeting.

GOOD WELFARE

This is the opportunity for members of the Veterans Affairs Commission to share special thanks and congratulatory remarks for the good welfare taking place in the veterans community.

- Good Welfare Comments included:
 - Congratulations to all involved on achievement to pass the recent veterans housing legislation.
 - Acknowledgement and congratulations to Allyson West of the San Francisco Superior Court, on the occasion of her retirement. Thanks offered to Ms. West for her dedicated work as director of the collaborative justice programs.



- Acknowledgement and thanks to Michael Blecker, the executive director of Swords to Plowshares, for his participation in the BMR legislation, and for taking over the mentorship program at the Veterans Justice Court.
- Commissioner Rusanoff thanked Courtney Ellington for her efforts on recent legislation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Public Comments included:
 - Michael Blecker with Swords to Plowshares commented on the important achievement of passing recent veterans legislation.

HONORS REPORT AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

In memory of American service members in all wars and conflicts who made the ultimate sacrifice. We also remember the passing of homeless veterans, veterans who died while awaiting approval of benefits, and suicides within the veteran and armed service communities.

ADJOURNMENT

President Mansori adjourned the meeting at 7:26pm.

The next regular meeting of the Veterans Affairs Commission will be held remotely at 6:00pm on Tuesday, September 13, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Murphy
Secretary to Veterans Affairs Commission

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Veterans Affairs Commission Meetings:

General meetings of the SFVAC are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month, with the exception for the month of July, when there is no scheduled SF VAC meeting, and are held in Room 416 in City Hall.

Meeting confirmation, and specific announcement of general meetings are made via public posting of the Meeting Agenda as required by law, at least 72 hours prior to scheduled meetings. Agendas for SFVAC meetings (and archived meeting minutes) are available on the SFVAC Pages of the City of San Francisco website, and are also available for public view and inspection at the 5th Floor Government Information Center at the San Francisco Public Library, at 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. The documents librarian telephone number is (415) 554-4472.

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Crisis Line**



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The Veterans Crisis Line is also available by texting 838255 or by going to their website and chatting with a mental health professional.



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